

# An Exploration of the Utilization of Supervision Feedbacks: The Case of Some Secondary Schools in Jimma Zone

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**Abstract** The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how secondary schools use the feedback they receive from the supervisors. Qualitative approach is holistic, contextual and focuses on design, and procedures to gain real, rich and deep data to have a wide understanding of the entire situation which is also applicable to this study. With this understanding therefore, qualitative approach was employed for this study. Accordingly, data were collected from Woreda education offices, school administration board, principals, vice-principals, supervisors, department heads, and senior teachers through in depth interview, FGD and document analysis. Then, the data were analyzed qualitatively theme by theme through narrative descriptions. The finding revealed that, there no difference among the schools concerning the importance of utilizing supervision feedbacks in improving teaching learning activities in schools. On the contrary, the actual utilization of supervision feedback is not as per the intended in all the schools under the study which indicates supervision feedback utilization is under challenge. Thus, majority of the schools have mentioned the followings as problems. These are supervision roles are simplified by the respective offices, low readiness of teachers to positively see the comments of supervisor, supervisor's lack of supervision skills to supervise teachers in giving objective feedback, lack of close cooperation from the side of Woreda education offices. They are criticizing the school being at a distance rather than arranging conditions to work in collaboration. Finally, measures to be taken by the concerned bodies to alleviate the problems were suggested both by research participants and researchers.

**Keywords** Supervision, Feedback, Quality Feedback, Feedback Utilization, Education Quality, School Performance

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Today, with a great understanding of the function that education has to the society and to the nation as whole, the world is striving to deliver education to its citizens. This goal has been on the international agenda since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed in 1948 that elementary education was to be made freely and compulsory available for all children in all nations[1]. However, it would be naïve to expect that education brings such changes without improving and ensuring its quality.

Cognizant of the fact that only quality education leads real development, most nations in the world have been established and implementing school supervision as an

important tool to monitor the quality of education provided by schools[2]. In Netherlands for instance, one of the aim of school supervision is to improve the quality of education through the provision of feedback to school officials on the performance of schools. Similarly, in England and Wales in its slogan "improvement through inspection" the office for standard of Education is expected to advice and support the development of school using inspection results[3]. In Tanzania also, the inspectorate for education is expected to give feedback to schools on their performance so that schools can capitalize on the feedback for better performance in the future[4]. In the cluster supervision system in Ethiopia, in the same vein supervision is improvement oriented and supervisors are expected to give quality feedback to schools follow up its implementation[5].

From the aforementioned experiences of different countries one can understand that giving quality feedback for schools is a vital component of school supervision to lead to real school improvement. Feedbacks given by supervisors help schools to improve their performance. For instance

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study Conducted by Ehren revealed that schools use the feedback they receive from inspectors for various areas of improvement[6] also argued that giving performance feedback to schools can improve their performance. Furthermore, feedback helps to initiate dialogue between schools, parents, teachers, students and administrators. In addition, it helps administrators to identify and plan professional development of staffs. It also serves schools to reconsider their strength and weakness so that it would be important input for while they develop school policies (Schildkamp and Ehren, n.d). Performance feedback also assists educators to identify areas of improvement so that action can be taken ones the area is already identified[7]. Furthermore, it can lead to improved practice and teacher development, and may even lead to increased student achievement[8] also argue that used properly, feedback leads to taking measures to change practices both at school and classroom level which ultimately results in school improvement. According to Mathews and Sammon cited in Ehren and Vissher[9] understandable and unequivocal feedback is an important input for school development plan that leads to more effective school practices. Brimblecombe *et al* (1996) and Chapman (2001) cited in Ehren and Visscher (2008) stated that teachers give invaluable credit for the feedback they receive from supervisors with the understanding that it urges school improvement process when there is a trust between schools and supervisors. In the same manner, Coe[10] argued that feedback can have positive effect in improving performance under “the right condition”.

However, at this juncture it is important to note that simply giving and receiving feedback on schools performance is not sufficient by itself to bring the desired change. Rather schools should translate the feedbacks they receive from the supervisors in to practice in such a way that it improves their function. This is due to the reason that supervision is effective when the recommendations are translated in to action and that action brings improvement on schools performance in general and students’ learning in particular. This implies that the effectiveness of supervision is determined by the extent of utilization of supervision feedback. Nevertheless, studies carried out so far to scrutinize the extent to which schools utilize supervision feedback is in short supply and few studies carried out so far on utilization of evaluation result in sum show that schools limitedly use such kind of results for improvement purpose. For instance, research done on the use of schools self evaluation results in Dutch primary schools showed that relatively small number of schools use the evaluation result [11]. The outcome of research conducted by Schildkamp[12] on data use of Dutch primary school also revealed limited use of data by teachers and principals for decision making. Furthermore, comparative study in to the use of School performance feedback system in the USA and Netherlands showed that even though there is slight difference in use of the results, it revealed the difficulty of using their result for school improvement[13]. Other studies also discovered squat

use and effect of school feedback. After investigating the perceptions of Flanders primary school principals about school performance feedback use, Verhaeghe, Van Petegam, Valcke and Vanhoof in their side concluded that no systematic use of feedbacks are observed although school performance feedback is perceived as important instrument for boosting school improvement.

Coming to developing countries like Ethiopia, schools supervision is as old as the introduction of modern education. Furthermore, these countries adopted school supervision as important tool of improving the quality of education. However, there is no sufficient insight about the utilization of supervision feedback, its effectiveness and factors that might hamper its utilization. One of the main causes of this deficient knowledge is poor interest among researchers on school supervision. The purpose of this study is therefore, to explore the utilization of supervision feedbacks in some secondary schools of Jimma Zone.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

With the assumption that school supervision leads to quality of Education, in Ethiopia it has been carried out for many years. The supervisors are there to visit schools and give feedback on what and how to improve their performance so that schools are expected to use the feedback to improve their functioning. The way the feedback is used and the extent of its utilization in schools has potential impact on the effectiveness of supervision and eventually on realizing the desired change. Supervision is effective when the feedback is found to be relevant, utilized and solid improvement is observed in schools.

However, to the best of the researchers’ knowledge attempts made so far to find out the utilization of supervision feedbacks in Ethiopian secondary schools in general and Jimma zone in particular is insignificant if not absent. The present study therefore, attempts to investigate the utilization of supervisors’ feedback by some secondary schools in Jimma zone. The study further uses the following guiding research questions

- a. How do schools view the importance and extent of the use of feedback they receive from the supervisors
- b. For what improvement areas do they use the feedbacks in their schools?
- c. What procedure do schools follow to utilize supervisors’ feedback?
- d. What are the roles of principals, teachers, supervisors and local education authorities in utilizing supervision feedbacks in the schools?
- e. What major obstacles do schools face in utilization of supervision feedback in the schools?
- f. What mechanisms do schools use to tackle these obstacles and what do they need to overcome the challenges?

## 1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how secondary schools use the feedback they receive from the supervisors. To this end, the study aimed at investigating

how schools view the extent of the use of feedback, major improvement areas in which the schools use the feedback, major problems schools face while utilizing the feedback and possible solutions to ameliorate the challenges.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Study

There are various factors that might affect the use of feedback. So, the findings of this study helps in understanding problems and issues related to using feedback for school improvement purpose. The study further provides valuable input for school principals, department heads, supervisors and district education officers so as to recognize the way feedback is used, factors influencing the use of feedback and take remedial actions to maximize its use with the ultimate aim of making school supervision more effective.

#### 1.5. Delimitations

This case study delimits itself to the utilization of feedback given by supervisors. It further delimits itself to some Public Secondary Schools in Jimma Zone.

## 2. Research Design and Method

### 2.1. Research Design

The purpose of this study is to explore how schools utilize supervision feedbacks in its natural context. According to Yin (1994), case study is appropriate design when the following three conditions are the feature of the study: the research questions are “how” questions, the focus is on the contemporary event and controls of behavioral events are not required. These three features are applicable in this study because the research questions are how questions, current condition of utilization of supervision feedback is the centre of attention and no event is to be controlled since the purpose is to understand the phenomenon in the context in which they exist.

### 2.2. Research Approach

Krathwohi (1998) argued that “qualitative approach is extremely useful for exploration- to find how to understand a phenomenon”. Qualitative approach is holistic, contextual and focuses on design, and procedures to gain real, rich and deep data to have a wide understanding of the entire situation (Biklen and Bogdan, 1992) which is also applicable to this study. With this understanding therefore, Qualitative approach will be employed for this study.

### 2.3. Participants of the Study

Woreda education offices, school administration board, principals, vice-principals, supervisors, department heads, and senior teachers were the source of data. Besides, international literature, policy directives, reports and other relevant documents were critically analyzed.

### 2.4. Sample and Sample Selection Procedure

Sample selection was done at two levels: schools and individuals within the school. There are twenty eight secondary schools in Jimma Zone. However, only five schools purposefully selected depending on their geographical distribution as long as the study is qualitative in nature and there is no interest in statistical generalization but providing in depth exploration so that generalization to the school with similar context can be done. Accordingly, one school from each direction i.e. center (Jimma town), East, West, North and South direction was drawn. From East Sekoru district, from West Gumay district, from north Limu Kosa district, from South Shabie district were drawn. In situation when there is more than one school in these districts, school with access of transportation was considered.

Regarding individuals from the school: principals, department heads, senior teachers (who are rich in information, interested in the study were drawn by taking into consideration gender representation); supervisors and school administration board were consulted.

### 2.5. Instruments for Data Collection

The most common instrument used for data collection in qualitative research are in-depth interview, Focus Group Discussions, and document analysis (Berg, 2001; Given, 2008). As a result, interview guiding questions were pre-designed and these instruments were used to collect data from Zone and woreda education offices, school board administration, and principals. Moreover, Focus Group Discussion was made with department heads and seniors teachers, but separately for each category.

### 2.6. Data Analysis

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) qualitative analysis of case study involves categorization and interpretation of data in terms of common themes in the way it serves the overall portrait of the case (cited in Fekede, 2009). For the present study, themes for analysis were identified from re-reading of the interviews and FGD scripts. Then, data collected with the help of interview and FGD were transcribed verbatim, categorized into the corresponding theme. Data from document analysis were interpreted and synchronized with interview and Focus Group Discussion data.

## 3. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to explore the utilization of supervision feedbacks in secondary schools of Jimma Zone. Accordingly, relevant data were collected through interview from secondary school supervisors, principals, department heads, unit leaders and teachers themselves. These data were analyzed qualitatively based on

the themes formulated through description or narration as follows.

### 3.1. Participants' view of the Importance of Supervisory Services for the Improvement of the School's Performances and Education Quality

As far as this issue is concerned, the respondents from Shebe Sombo Woreda were asked that "Can we say that the supervision currently given is important and purposeful in improving school practices and quality of education?"

Accordingly, the respondents have explained the points as follows: The deputy educational head answered that indeed there is no secondary school supervisor in the Woreda at this moment. He further explained that though the Woreda education office invited potential candidates to apply for the position, it could not be possible to get an applicant who fulfills minimum requirement especially in terms of the level of education. Since the business owner of supervision service is assigned to carry out this task as an extra duty, it is not possible to say that the supervision service is being properly carried out and consequently the necessary improvement is observed in the school. What is more, the deputy head stressed is that there is no way to say that supervision is helping schools improve their performance where the students' pass rate in 10<sup>th</sup> grade national exam in the school is only 10%.

However, he is not skeptical from the assumption that supervision is a crucial tool to improve school leadership, create smooth relationship among school community, identify school problems and create mechanism through which schools share experience and ultimately enhance the academic achievement of their learners if properly handled. Similarly, in Sekoru Woreda the head of the Education office stated that supervision was established as an independent office at the woreda level very recently. Hence, one supervisor was assigned for three secondary schools in the woreda, which based his seat at Sekoru Secondary school. Thus, Sekoru Secondary school is the cluster center for the other schools.

Taking the past experiences into consideration, this year (at the moment this interview was conducted) the head of the Woreda Education Bureau reported that the supervision practices created consciousness in the minds of teachers and he was optimistic that the practice was raising students' achievement.

Unlike that of Shabie Sombo Woreda, the Education Office head of Sekoru Woreda explained that since the last two years, supervision follow up has been increasing. This also resulted in the gradual increment in the number of students joining preparatory schools and decrease in drop out as well as attrition rates. The education office head of Toba woreda also reported the presence of supervision feedback provision though it is not in a continuous manner. To this effect, implementation of supervision feedback was reported to be done partially. The feedbacks were being provided in written form as well as orally on meetings. The office head

commented that, this year the practice of supervision was relatively good as the supervisor was assigned to carry out the task of supervision as an independent duty.

A supervisor from Limmu Genet Woreda was also asked the same question and replied that "yes it is necessary and that is why a new approach of supervision was started two years ago." According to him, the new approach of supervision practice needs a collaborative effort among different stakeholders to bring about the required changes on school performances and quality of education. He described some of the practical examples/evidences that supervision brought as indicated below:

- Students' achievement enhanced
- New library is under construction due to the efforts made by supervisor and the school teachers
- Regular supervisions with on-spot feedbacks were provided which in turn contributes to students' achievement, etc.

The case in this woreda seems more practical, since there is a supervision services given by the full time supervisor working on the secondary schools found in the Woreda.

Contrary to this, the supervisor newly assigned to Toba secondary school has stated that there was no supervision conducted and feedback given so far. But, it is in the future that the supervisor is planning to do. Hence the supervisor confirmed that there were no actions taken due to supervision feedback on teachers as well as on schools. So it is possible to say that the practice of supervision and provision of feedback is very pre-matured in Toba woreda.

Views from Sekoru Woreda supervisor, regarding the improvement obtained due to supervision services, the supervisor responded that he is recently assigned to the school and he can speak little about the improvement obtained so far. The supervisor confirmed that a sort of coaching supervision is going on in their school after arranging the date of supervision with teachers. The supervisor also arranged the time when model teachers can help and weak teachers can be helped. Contrary to the above discussions, the case in Shabie Sombo Woreda seems different in that there is no supervisor assigned to secondary school until the time of this data collection. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about the importances of supervision practices in the absence of supervisors.

According to the response obtained from Sekoru Secondary school principal, it is undeniable that supervision and its feedback have an advantage to the school in general and students in particular. The major problem as confirmed by the director is supervision has brought little impact as people took it as simply inspection rather than support.

Despite the fact that the principal believes on the importance of supervision, it is not doing its business as per the objectives as teachers are not admitting their mistake and try to learn from the feedbacks given. Rather some of the teachers have the firm stand that supervisor know nothing about my subject matter and unable to take comments from supervisor.

A principal from Hawi Shabie secondary school was also replied that “though there is no supervisor assigned to our school at this moment, it is possible to say that there are supervision practices in our school even if it cannot solve the school problems”. He was asked to explain the importance of supervision in improving the school performance. Accordingly, the principal responded that in principle it is important; however the current supervision service hardly helps school to bring about the desired change due to various reasons. As to him, in the Woreda there is no secondary school supervisor though the existing structure allows having such kind of expert at Woreda level. Instead a person who is assigned to coordinate the entire supervision service in the Woreda is assigned to supervise our school as an additional duty which according to the principal is the major challenge for poor secondary school supervision as the person is busy with office routines and cannot regularly visit school and provide the necessary support.

Teachers and heads of the departments participated in focused group discussion; from Shabie secondary school also raised the absence of external supervisor in the school except the internal supervision made by department heads. However, they tried to indicate the importance of supervision in solving problems though they cannot mention some practical examples/evidences brought by supervision in that school. They also tried to elaborate the effect of lack of such supervision practices by attaching it with poor performances of students. They said that only 10% of the students who sat for grade ten national examinations joined the preparatory and there is high dropout rate in the school. They further stated that students never come to the school during the holly day week/s and market days which has also its own major impact on their academic achievement and school performances. However, they assumed that if there is a supervisor who can work at the secondary school as a full time employee, he/she can solve a problem and in such regards supervision has significances.

On the other hand, participants of FGD from Sekoru Secondary school agreed that the supervisory activities being implemented by the school has tremendous importance in enhancing the school performance. They explained that, in the past, there was more of external supervision focusing on more of the administrative issue, activities outside of the classroom than directly targeting on classroom practices. Internal supervision used to be conducted for the sake of filling teachers' efficiency. In this case, since the exact date on which the classroom observation conducted is known, participants reported that teachers prepared well on that particular date but thereafter backed to their usual practice. Moreover, the lesson/weekly/annual plan teachers submitted to internal and external supervisor was used to be far away from what is actually implemented in the classroom.

However, participants reported that this was solved since they started strictly implementing internal supervision as long as the internal supervisor is familiar with the contents of the subject matter as well as to the teacher too. Again,

making the internal supervision randomly is enforcing teachers to prepare themselves regularly.

In general the participants have mentioned the following improvements as a result of supervisory feedbacks:

- Teachers are working according to the pace of students (e.g. Providing special tutorial for slow learners and female students)
- Supporting teaching with instructional aids,
- Feedback help them to change the approach of attendance hence large number of students were coming for the tutorial,
- Teachers learn from each other, implementing continuous assessment in large class size (teachers from language stream),
- The discordance regarding what is planned and actually implemented in a class room minimized as a result of internal supervision (repeatedly mentioned by participants from different department)
- Collegial relationship among teachers increased as a result of teachers' accepting each other's comment positively for improvement (Teacher from the Natural Science stream),
- Teachers are improving their classroom teaching, lesson plan preparation and utilization of resources.

Regarding the importances of supervision and its feedback in improving the performances of schools, the views of teachers and department heads from Toba and Limmu secondary schools were not entertained due to:

- Absence of the practices in Toba secondary school
- Absence of the respondents from Limmu secondary school during the time of data collection.

### 3.2. The Extent of Utilization of Supervision Feedback

The head of education office from Shabie Sombo woreda denoted that in most cases, the school does not utilize feedbacks given. The supervisor usually gives recommendation for the school but improvement being observed in the school is insignificant and this according to him shows that feedback given is not being utilized properly. He tried to elaborate the situation where supervision feedbacks are not utilized in secondary schools. For instance, he stated that feedbacks that lead to taking corrective measures did not put in to practices; reluctances from teachers in utilizing the feedbacks and the like are some of the good indicators for not utilizing it. However, we have observed that there is no full time supervisor assigned to that secondary school for the time being and with that consent it is difficult to expect such effective utilization of supervision feedbacks.

According to the response from Sekoru Woreda education office head, the supervisor reports the progress and challenges in implementing the supervision feedback to the office regularly. However, he added that at office level they have not yet taken action on the basis of recommendation provided from the supervisor. As the head explained they were extremely busy in addressing the whole level of

education in the woreda where their focus was more on the primary school due to highly pronounced problem there.

Therefore, the effects brought as a result of supervision feedbacks were very minimal as the head of education explained. He further elaborated the situation in that last academic year (2009/10) supervision report was communicated after nine month of the commencement of school implying that the feedback was very late. Hence, at that moment panels forecasted that there would be more advantages of the supervision feedbacks if it had been conducted from the beginning on continual bases, and recommended the Woreda to run supervision right from the beginning in which the cluster supervisor supervises each teacher in the school at least at the interval of two months.

A supervisor from Limmu Genet Woreda was also asked the same question and replied it as the extent of utilizing supervision feedbacks varies based on experiences and ages of the teachers. He explained it as “highly experienced/relatively older teachers/ are effectively utilizing the feedbacks while it is not effective for the newly employed/less experienced/relatively younger teachers”. This is because, majority of the youngest/less experienced teachers/ are assuming themselves as the only individuals who are knowledgeable and do not want to hear their weaknesses rather than strengths, the supervisor said.

Concerning the utilization of supervision feedback, the supervisor from Sekoru Cluster Resource center (CRC) explained that teachers were told to correct mistake in the use of teaching methods and assessment techniques to be employed in a classroom. Accordingly, some people admitted and work to correct themselves while others are in difficulty of doing so. According to his response, feedback is given individually and also in general discussion among all the staff members eventhough there is variations among the staff members in accepting and utilizing feedbacks. With regards to the utilization of supervision feedbacks in Toba Secondary school, the supervisor contested that due to the absence of supervision services it is difficult to talk about the extent of its utilization.

The principal from Hawi Shabie secondary school was also asked to explicate the degree of feedback utilization in his school. He responded that there are feedbacks that they make use of. However there are also feedbacks that remain unutilized. According to him, most of the feedbacks are not utilized because of the reason that their implementations needs budget which the school cannot afford/subsidize. Organizing and equipping ICT centers with computers, organizing pedagogical centers and libraries and supplying text books are some of the most frequently given feedback since long ago by the assigned supervisor. Conversely, these remain problems of the school even today as the implementation of all these feedbacks needs the school to allocate sufficient budget in the case where the annual budget of the school is only 18,000 birr, the principal avowed. He further denoted that if supervisor give for instance three feedbacks, the school shall implement only one in most cases.

As explained by the principal of Sekoru secondary school, teachers are not taking suggestion given honestly and optimistically, rather they preferred to defend themselves. Even sometimes there is also a capacity problem from the side of teachers to teach their subject matter and hence they do not admit their mistake. They used to resist rather than taking and using the feedbacks given for further improvement.

In a similar fashion, the principal of Toba secondary school was asked to reflect on the extent of feedback utilization and impact of supervision attained so far he confirmed that it has brought a change particularly on student behavior. Academic wise, it is hardly possible to say there is a change since students' performance is declining through time.

Moreover, with regard to the acceptance of the feedback given by supervisors in this school, the principal replied that teachers are used to look it negatively as the activity is simply a personal interest of the supervisor. Most of the teachers are not ready to accept the feedback given and not unable to accept the supervisor where he could not able to observe classrooms. Because of this the school was unable to carry out supervision and unable to give timely feedback. It is in the future that the school planned to conduct supervision and hence they recently start to train teachers on the issues and importance of supervision so that they can internalize and make use of it. But before that the school did nothing with regard to supervision and feedback.

The responses gained from participants of FGD (department heads and teachers) in Hawi Shabie secondary school also show similar results in that majority of the comments given by the representatives of supervisor from the Woreda cannot be solved with the school's capacity. Hence, they suggested that the responsible/concerned bodies should play their vital roles in bringing the required changes.

On top of this, FGD participants from Sekoru secondary school mentioned that despite the progresses obtained, the utilization of supervisory feedback does not guarantee absolutely effective implementation of instructional supervision. Teachers and department heads disclosed that still some teachers were viewing classroom observation as an inspection because of the past experiences they held. As the head of Natural Science stream discussed, teachers were accepting the value of supervision, accept positively the comments provided but still there was limitation in realizing comments provided. The supervision they experienced in the past years was more of inspection. It was conducted for the sake of evaluation hence teachers reported that they were not receiving feedback. But now, the school has organized two types of internal supervision: formal and informal supervision where each of them commenced at least once in a month. The formal supervision conducted in a programmatic way while informal supervision takes roundly once in a month as deem needed. Coming to external supervision or cluster supervision, teachers explained that the pedagogical and subject matter knowledge of external supervisors was not to the desired level. As a result, the

comments they provided were something that they had in their mind than looking critical at the educational value of the action the teachers have taken. As a result, teachers were always prepared for defense.

Hence, the degree of utilization of feedback provided is very less in this school. The good thing is that school has been taking measures to minimize the later mentioned constraints. Subject matter specialist from the department would accompany the external supervisor during classroom observation as well as provision of the feedback. The views of teachers and department heads from Toba and Limmu secondary schools were not entertained here also due to:

- Absence of the practices in Toba secondary school
- Absence of the respondents from Limmu secondary school during the time of data collection.

### 3.3. The Quality of Feedbacks Given by Supervisors

The participants were also asked to explain the quality of feedbacks given by supervisors when examined in terms of relevance, clarity, feasibility, timeliness, etc. Accordingly, education office heads from Shabie Sombo and Sekoru woreda mentioned that the feedbacks provided by supervisors lacks clarity, relevance and it is more of inspection rather than supportive. However, supervisors in some of the schools have disclosed that the feedbacks given vary from supervisor to supervisor and in most cases they said that the feedbacks have good qualities when examined in terms of clarity, relevance, timeliness and feasibility.

The supervisor interviewed from Limmu Genet woreda, for instance, elaborated the quality of the feedbacks given as relevant, clear, timeliness and feasible. He further explained it by stressing some of the practical evidences that indicates the quality of the feedbacks. He said that “it is based on the feedbacks I provided and the mechanisms I developed that helped the school to build a library by mobilizing the community and other stakeholders”.

The reserachers also observed the new library which is under construction. The school communities (teachers, students and administrators) were also in the field to generate income which was used to finalize the library. The aforementioned supervisor added that there are also greater improvements brought on students' academic achievement which took the first rank last year in the number of students who passed the national examination and it is an indicator for the quality of the feedbacks given by the supervisor.

Another principal from Sekoru woreda was also asked similar issue and responded that most of the time supervisors were applying a kind of clinical supervision and hence more focused on fault finding than improvement. Some of the comments given were not practical by a single teacher (that is it lacks feasibility). On top of this, supervision was not conducted at the right time due to scarcity of time from the side of supervisors. Some of the causes mentioned by this principal are:

1. Students are not coming on time and long time spent on this to start supervision on tome

2. Secondly, social factor is also a reason affecting the practice of supervision

3. Resistance from teachers side not to be supervised

Concerning the clarity of the feedbacks given, there was a problem where supervisors are not focusing on the actual business of supervision, which is it lacks clarity. What is strange, contrary to what is ought to be, the teachers and department heads participated in FGD at Hawi Shabie secondary school reacted that there are rarely situations in which the supervisor observe their lessons and give feedback so as to assist them improve their instructional skill; the supervisor's communication is limited to the school principal. Hence, there is no way that the teachers judge the quality of feedbacks given by supervisor based on the given criteria.

Similarly, teachers and department heads from Sekoru secondary school disclosed that there is a problem on the qualities of supervision feedbacks given. The supervision they experienced in the past years was more of inspection which was based itself on fault finding. The teachers further explained that the pedagogical and subject matter knowledge of external supervisors was not to the desired level. As a result, the comments they provided were something that they had in their mind than looking critical at the educational value of the action the teachers have taken. However, the efforts made to triangulate the result with the views of school principal (particular for Limmu), department heads and teachers from Toba and Limmu secondary school were not successful due to the aforementioned problems.

### 3.4. Focus of the Supervision Feedbacks Given by the Supervisor

The participants were asked the question “To what major improvement areas (administrative and pedagogical aspects) do you use the feedback given by supervisors?” and replied as follows. Shabie Sombo woreda education office deputy head was asked about this issue and replied that it is challenging for one supervisor to observe teachers' lesson and give feedback that assists them in order to develop their instructional skill. What he can do is to strengthen internal supervision in which veteran teachers mentor the novice one (more of pedagogical in this respect). Thus, the role of the external supervision becomes coordination of the internal supervision (more of administrative).

Contrary to this, supervisor from Limmu Genet woreda was also asked similar question and replied that majority of the feedbacks given are used for pedagogical purposes. As he said, the feedbacks mostly he is providing focuses on pedagogical aspects which include the methodologies of teaching, assessment mechanisms, giving immediate and timely feedbacks for the learners, etc. He added that sometimes there are also situations in which he provides feedbacks that are important in improving the administrative aspects as well. He tried to justify the reason why he preferred to emphasize on pedagogical aspects by mentioning that “it is due to the fact that major issues in

education are focusing on the teaching-learning process”.

Strengthening this, the supervisor from Sekoru woreda stated that the supervision provided is mostly focuses on pedagogical element such as teaching-learning, quality of education, co-curricular activities, laboratory, pedagogical center and classroom teaching. Nevertheless, a supervisor from Toba woreda said that his roles were more of providing comments, follow up and supporting but more focusing on the administrative than pedagogical aspects. However, he said that he has a plan for this academic year to conduct clinical supervision where he would touch the pedagogical aspects too.

In view of this, the principal from Hawi Shabie secondary school replied that most of the time they use feedback given by supervisors to improve such things as school leadership, creating smooth relationship among school community, and students' discipline. Along with this, he explained that feedbacks given by the supervisor prone to administrative dimension of the school.

In the same vein, the principal of Sekoru secondary school confirmed that supervision feedback has an advantage and used to:

1. evaluate the efficiency of the teacher
2. identify teacher who should be promoted and rewarded
3. identify teacher who has the potential to be a director or supervisor
4. plan for further training of the teacher

As mentioned by him, pedagogically supervision is meant to enhance the performance of teachers and improve the performance of the school in general. However, the external supervision usually focuses on the administrative aspect, which is inspection of teachers than the pedagogical one and due to that teachers consider supervision practice not as support element but as political pressure damped on them by the school.

The teachers participated in FGD from the same school also stated that if the supervisor do not observe teachers lesson and give the necessary feedback and follow its implementation, it would be difficult if not impossible to argue that the feedback is more of pedagogical. They elaborated the situation by stating that the pedagogical supervision practices in the school seems superficial since it is done simply by checking the lesson plans and asking/ interviewing students and discussing with the teachers. They said that there is no classroom observations made by the supervisor and the feedbacks are given based on the issues raised outside of the classroom. They further discussed that the awareness about the value of supervision feedback is improving at all levels from time to time. Teachers were reported to be energetic and showing keen interest for improvement. But, lack of experiences is making them to view supervision as a means of controlling them.

However, some FGD participants (department heads from this school) mentioned that classroom observations by the internal supervisors were more of pedagogical in its aspects. To list some but not all, teaching methodology, assessment

methods, utilization of instructional aides, and classroom management are examples. But, the external supervisors were focused more on commenting the administrative aspects.

### 3.5. Procedures Followed to Implement the Feedbacks Given by Supervisors

The participants were asked about the procedures followed to implement the feedbacks given and provide the following answers. As explained by the education office head of Shabie Sombo woreda, there are procedures followed by the school to implement the feedbacks provided by supervisors. For instance, identifying the students result ahead while scheduling the tutorial sessions, staff meetings once monthly, departmental meetings twice monthly, and discussing on how to put the feedbacks given in to practice. Based on what is discussed all the concerned bodies include the comments in to their plan and try to implement it.

Another interviewed supervisor from Limmu Kossa/Genet woreda on the contrary replied that there is no written procedure followed in implementing the feedbacks given. But there are things done by support provider team. The main duty of the team is to give necessary support for the teachers to capacitate them based on the comments given by the supervisor.

The case of Toba seems different in that there is no plan when to conduct supervision and even the know-how of it. The question of “who will put the feedbacks given in to practices” is not clearly spelt out in Toba secondary school as confirmed by the principals. Teachers and department heads have also indicated that the efficiency of the teachers was recorded without classroom observation simply by asking people. The basic reason why classroom observation is not conducted, as stated by the principals, was that everyone is running behind routine school activities such as duplication of text books for students and searching stationeries for duplication.

Regarding the procedures, in Sekoru woreda feedbacks are provided for the individual teacher at a classroom level, in the case of formal supervision and external/cluster supervision, debriefing takes place on the areas for improvement. And then the comment is recorded for follow up. Moreover, for general feedbacks provided from external supervisors for the school in general, discussion on the feedback usually done at the school management, then its relevance, feasibility and applicability debated on then passed to the department for further brainstorming and possible implementation. To this end, the school management has a regular meeting once each month and at a department level twice within a month (Woreda education officer's view.) The supervisor from the same woreda also forwarded that yes there are procedures to give feedback for schools and the teachers even though he could not mention them at that moment. A principal from Sekoru secondary school on the other hand depicted that, it is difficult to say there are procedures and the practice is any time available



and no fixed schedule for conducting supervision. After the supervision, if teachers have shown weakness they will be given module to read and there is nothing to be done. In general, there are efforts made in some schools to have clear and planned ways to put in to practice the feedbacks given by supervisors. However, disparities are observed among the schools and Woredas in this regards.

### 3.6. The Duties and Responsibilities of the Concerned Bodies in Implementing the Feedbacks

The respondents were also asked about the duties and responsibilities played by the concerned bodies to implement the feedbacks given and replied it as follows. Views of respondents from Shabie Sombo woreda generally indicates that the woreda education office should follow strictly the works of the schools and try to take part in solving school problems though there are poor practices observed. The principals should handle both the academic and administrative aspects. However, the academic aspects are sometimes left for the vice principals in some schools. The department heads and the teachers are expected to take the responsibilities of putting the feedbacks given in to practices. For instance, the principals are expected to encourage teachers to implement feedbacks and the teachers are expected to implement committedly what is suggested by the supervisor. The supervisors should also play a decisive role in making effective use of the feedbacks (Respondents view from Shabie Sombo).

Strengthening this, a supervisor from Limmu Kossa woreda also stated that each of the concerned bodies have their own duties and responsibilities though their levels varies. When the actual practices of all the responsible bodies are examined, as indicated by the supervisor of this woreda, it is possible to say that almost all of them are trying to discharge their duties and responsibilities eventhough they did not want to cooperate with others.

Participants from Sekoru woreda stated the role of principals and vice principals in implementing supervision feedback as to be more focusing on making external environment attractive (laboratory, pedagogical centers, class attendances, monitoring the dressing norms of teachers, and the like) than directly focusing on the classroom practices. But they were eventually showing improvements in balancing their attention for external and classroom endeavors. Likewise, the activities of heads and cluster supervisor have been improving. The problem, as respondents mentioned is the case of Woreda and zonal level supervisors. As teachers mentioned they came to school only when they wanted of data for report. However, they recognized the major activity that pressurized these level supervisors mentioning that they were mostly in a field work to initiate farmers to send the youngsters to school.

The idea raised by the school principal from the same school also shows that it is very recently at which all the parties (teachers, principals, supervisors and educational officers) started to play their role except that of supervisor

where he is doing his best. The rest were recently understood the roles of supervision and feedback given and now started to move.

### 3.7. The Major Obstacles that Affect the Supervision Services

The major challenges of supervision and utilization of its feedback as stated by supervisor are:

- Sometimes roles are simplified by the respective offices
- Transportation problem is a critical issue to move here and there in order to visit schools and give timely feedback.
- Supervision lacks clear direction from the regional education bureau
- Lack of cooperation between primary and secondary schools

## 4. Conclusions

Based on the above analysis the following conclusions were drawn;

- In all schools understudy participants have the view that supervision has significant contribution to improve their schools' performance if handled properly.
- In most of the schools understudy the focus of supervision feedback is on administrative issues that have less relevance for school improvement. Pedagogical issues are less emphasized with compared to the administrative ones.
- In all schools there is no well defined procedure to be followed in order to utilize supervision feedback and this resulted in poor utilization of feedbacks provided by supervisors
- Though all stakeholders such as school principals, supervisors, teachers and woreda education officers have been attempting to play roles expected of them, their effort is not to the desired level.
- The major impediment of supervision in the schools understudy are:
  - ✓ Lack of qualified supervisors
  - ✓ Shortage of classrooms and text books
  - ✓ Shortage/lack /of libraries and ICT rooms
  - ✓ Shortage of budget and resources
  - ✓ Shortage of logistics from the education offices
  - ✓ Wrong perceptions on the part of the teachers in considering supervisors as fault finders
  - ✓ Poor community participation
  - ✓ Lack of support and cooperation from zonal education desk
  - ✓ Lack of clear directives
  - ✓ Absence of well organized Continuous professional development program for supervisors and school principals
  - ✓ High attrition rate of supervisors, principals and experienced teachers
  - ✓ In adequate attention given to supervision service

- ✓ Absence of coordination among different stakeholders such as schools, supervisors and district education office.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions the following recommendations are given;

- The schools understudy should carefully plan to use the existing meager resources in an efficient manner.
- The regional education office should reconsider the minimum level of education required for secondary school supervisors so that teachers with Bachelor degree and long year teaching experience can be recruited for rural secondary schools
- The Woreda/district education office should arrange well organized Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training for secondary school principals and supervisors.
- The schools should arrange forums to create cooperative and supportive work environments with supervisors and woreda education offices
- The woreda education office and schools should strengthen internal supervision so as to address some of the gaps observed as a result of lack of qualified external supervisors.

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